AMENDMENTS

In the Claims

The following is a marked-up version of the claims with the language that is underlined ("___") being added and the language that contains strikethrough ("~~___~~") being deleted:

1. (Currently Amended) A communication method ~~comprising the steps of:~~ comprising:

providing a user profile having a collection of properties related to a user email folder, the user profile further having a collection of properties related to a user instant messaging (IM) account;

defining properties of the user email folder using the user profile; ~~and~~

defining properties of the user IM account using the user ~~profile.~~ profile; and

providing at least one interface for displaying the user profile, including the defined properties of the user email folder and the defined properties of the user IM account,

wherein the interface is further configured to provide at least one group email message corresponding to at least one group email folder, the group email folder configured such that members of a group associated with the group email folder have access to the group email message,

wherein the interface is further configured to provide an option to provide at least one user-specific email, the user-specific email being different than the group email message, and

wherein the group email message includes an access indicator for each member of the group, the access indicator configured to indicate which members of the group have accessed the group email message.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~the step of~~ providing the user profiles ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

assigning a user profile to a user;

permitting the user assigned to the user profile to have access to the at least one user email folder associated with the user profile; and

permitting the user assigned to the user profile to have access to the at least one group email folder.

3. (Currently Amended) A communication method ~~comprising the steps of:~~ comprising:

assigning a user profile to a user;

associating a user email folder with the user profile; ~~and~~

associating a user instant messaging (IM) account with the user ~~profile.~~ profile; and

providing at least one interface for displaying the user profile, including the defined properties of the user email folder and the defined properties of the user IM account,

wherein the interface is further configured to provide at least one group email message corresponding to at least one group email folder, the group email folder configured such that members of a group associated with the group email folder have access to the group email message,

wherein the interface is further configured to provide an option to provide at least one user-specific email, the user-specific email being different than the group email message, and

wherein the group email message includes an access indicator for each member of the group, the access indicator configured to indicate which members of the group have accessed the group email message.

4. (Currently Amended)The method of claim 3, further ~~comprising the step of:~~ comprising:

defining properties associated with the user email folder as a function of the user profile.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user email folder ~~comprises the steps of:~~ comprises:

assigning a user name associated with the user; and

assigning a password associated with the user name.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user email folder ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

assigning a user type associated with the user.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user email folder ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

assigning a collection of email folders to the user.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein ~~the step of~~ assigning the collection of email folders to the user ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

storing post office protocol 3 (POP3) server information for each email folder in the collection of email folders.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein ~~the step of~~ assigning the collection of email folders to the user ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

storing simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) server information for each email folder in the collection of email folders.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user email folder ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

storing email filter settings.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user email folder ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

storing an addressbook associated with the user.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein ~~the step of~~ storing the addressbook associated with the user ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

assigning addressbook settings to the addressbook.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, further ~~comprising the step of:~~ comprises:

defining properties associated with the user IM account as a function of the user profile.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user IM account ~~comprises the steps of:~~ comprises:

assigning a user name associated with the user; and

assigning a password associated with the user name.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user IM account ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

assigning a user type associated with the user.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user IM account ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

assigning a collection of IM accounts to the user.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein ~~the step of~~ defining properties associated with the user IM account ~~comprises the step of:~~ comprises:

storing a contact list associated with the user.

18. (Currently Amended) A communication system comprising:

a user profile;

a user email folder associated with the user profile; ~~and~~

a user instant messaging (IM) account associated with the user ~~profile.~~ profile; and

an interface for displaying the user profile, including the defined properties of the user email folder and the defined properties of the user IM account,

wherein the interface is further configured to provide at least one group email message corresponding to at least one group email folder, the group email folder configured such that members of a group associated with the group email folder have access to the group email message,

wherein the interface is further configured to provide an option to provide at least one user-specific email, the user-specific email being different than the group email message, and

wherein the group email message includes an access indicator for each member of the group, the access indicator configured to indicate which members of the group have accessed the group email message.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the user profile is configured to define properties associated with the user email folder.

20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 19, wherein the properties associated with the user email folder include at least one property selected from the group consisting of:

a user name;

a password;

post office protocol 3 (POP3) server information;

simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) server information;

a collection of email folders;

a user type; and

an email filter ~~setting; and~~ setting.

~~an addressbook setting.~~

21. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the user profile is configured to define properties associated with the user IM account.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the properties associated with the user IM account include at least one property selected from the group consisting of:

a user name;

a password;

a collection of IM accounts; and

a contact list.